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HELLENISM IN THE EAST:
SOME HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REMARKS¹

The Classical paradigm

In his essay *De fortuna Alexandri* (318 f.), Plutarch seems to have introduced the image of an expanding Greek civilization with the goal of taming the barbarous East. Plutarch had his own conception of 'Hellenism', which had a considerable influence on modern scholarship: as Claire Préaux keenly argued, Droysen, the inventor of the modern meaning of Hellenism, was actually casting Plutarch in a Hegelian mould.²

The traditional concept of Hellenism implies a rigid opposition between East and West. But such an opposition, at least in the terms we often find in Classical scholarship, is in fact modern. True, Greek anthropological thought is based on opposite pairs (Greek/Barbarian, citizen/*agroikos*, hot/cold and so on); and in some Latin writers, we may be misled by descriptions of "Levantine" which remind us more recent situations, and give a false impression of continuity in the western construction of the East, from the Classics on down. Despite these cases, the concept of the "Ancient East" is a category of modern thought. "East" as a *lieu de mémoire* is mostly a Romantic construction³: this is indeed a very interesting chapter of Western thought and of classical scholarship, and deserves a thorough investigation in its own right (possibly in Edward Said's rather than in Bernal's terms).

For a long time, classical studies have been influenced by the Hellenic 'traditional' attitude towards the East and Easterners, usually associated implicitly with modern Levantines. Even those who disliked German racial theories found other ways of maintaining a cultural tradition which in fact justified the superiority of Westerners, as this rhetorical performance by E.A. Freeman reveals:

¹ This article is a part of a larger paper, entitled *Looking for Greekness in Ancient Armenia and Iran*, which has been partly discussed at the conference *Greeks on Greekness*, organized by David Konstan and Suzanne Saïd, held at the Harvard Center of Hellenic Studies (Washington, D.C.), in August 2001.

² See Préaux 1965: 125–139. For definitions of Hellenism, see Canfora 1987 (1994).

³ See Isaac 1992: 20 f.

*Thus, wherever we go, we find language to be the rough practical test of nationality. The exceptions are many; they may perhaps outnumber the instances which conform to the rule. Still they are exceptions. Community of language does not imply community of blood; it might be added that diversity of language does not imply diversity of blood. But community of language is, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, a presumption of the community of blood, and it is proof of something which for practical purposes is the same as community of blood.*⁴

We could find many such assertions in Western literature. A partial survey of these ideological tendencies may be found in the first volume of Bernal's *Black Athena*, although marked by an excessive preference – quite amazing for a linguist, – for literature in English. As a great part of Western education was based on Classics, it would be almost impossible to write a thorough history of the ideology of Hellenism, since any petty schoolmaster had his *mot à dire* about the matter.

Classicists have suffered from a long tradition of misinterpretation of the East, which has allowed them to imagine a sort of ideal continuity from Antiquity to modern times. We may recall Momigliano's account:

*The average knowledge of an educated modern man about India is not superior to that which is to be found in Greek and Roman writers. Even now there is no obligation in our traditional curriculum to now anything about China because the Greeks and the Romans knew nothing or almost nothing about it.*⁵

But since all these issues have been treated in detail over the last decade by the revisers of the classical paradigm, I shall do no more than note the following passage, published as far back as 1877 by one of the noblest European Philhellenes:

*The literature of a people is so intimately connected with the local circumstances which influence education, taste, and morals, that it can never be transplanted without undergoing a great alteration. It is not wonderful, therefore, that the literature of the Greeks, after the extension of their dominion in the East, should have undergone a great change; but it seems remarkable that this change should have proved invariably injurious to all its peculiar excellencies. It is singular, at the same time, to find how little the Greeks occupied themselves in the examination of the stores of knowledge possessed by the Eastern nations. The situations and interests of the Asiatic and Egyptian Greeks must have compelled many to learn the languages of the countries which they inhabited, and the literature of the East was laid open to their investigation. They appear to have availed themselves very sparingly of these advantages. Even in history and geography, they made but small additions to the information already collected by Herodotus, Ctesias, and Xenophon; and this supercilious neglect of foreign literature has been the cause of depriving modern times of all records of the powerful and civilized nations which flourished while Greece was in a state of barbarism. Had the Macedonians or Romans treated the history and literature of Greece with the contempt which the Greeks showed to the records of the Phoenicians, Persians, and Egyptians, it is not probable that any very extensive remains of later Greek literature would have reached us.*⁶

The resemblance between these comments and certain pages of *Alien Wisdom* is amazing: as Momigliano read almost everything, he may have been inspired by Finlay. Yet neither do we find Finlay in the bibliography of *Alien Wisdom*, nor do we find views such as his expressed by

⁴ Freeman 1879: 224.

⁵ Momigliano 1976:12 (see also the Italian revised edition: *Saggezza straniera. L'ellenismo e le altre culture*, Torino 1980).

⁶ Finlay 1877: 8.

Western scholars in the generations between Finlay and Momigliano: as a matter of fact, Finlay was an eccentric member of the Philhellene club, as his form of philhellenism, possibly depending on his Presbyterian education, was fairly critical, and vaccinated, somehow, against excessive romanticism.⁷ We would have hardly found such observations in more ordinary, usually more unconditional Philhellenes of Finlay's time. In any case, average Hellenists were well placed to influence Western education. Some generations later, the effects of this tradition would rouse the ire of ambitious, angry paradigm-busters like a young Martin Bernal confronting the pompous atmosphere of the Telluride house at Cornell University.⁸

The case of Victor Chapot

At least from the mid-XIX century onwards, specialists began to review the literary evidence on Hellenism in the East in the light of new archaeological finds. These studies took for granted the opposition between 'Hellenism' and 'East', but did not investigate the phenomenon as a whole. The first comprehensive scientific essay on the presence of Hellenism beyond the Euphrates appeared in 1904. Its author was the French archaeologist Victor Chapot (1873–1954), who presented it to the French Society of Antiquaries.⁹ Although at that time, many inscriptions and sites were still to be discovered, Chapot – who had some personal knowledge of the Near East – made a considerable effort of synthesis of the rather scattered evidence, and managed to draw some basic conclusions that are still seem up to the level modern scientific discussion on the matter. Moreover, he was the first to review a great deal of evidence in order to prove his opinions with something more than aprioristic observations, as most of his predecessors had done.

However serious, Victor Chapot's scholarship was nonetheless deeply marked by colonial ideology. In his opinion, even in Iranian eyes Greek civilization was undoubtedly superior. Nonetheless, in the Parthian period, both artistic and literary evidence show a remarkable Hellenic influence, which Chapot explained as a result of a practical "accommodation" – the Parthians, "peuple de mœurs très simples, tout adonné à la chasse et à la guerre",¹⁰ exploited the know-how of the Greek communities dwelling in the cities of Iran, and used Greek scholars as a sort of intellectual mercenaries, in order to compensate for the poverty of Iranian culture. Thus, the Parthian dynasty

*s'accommodait des choses grecques sans les copier littéralement, en acceptait volontiers certains avantages pratiques, n'affectait pour une civilisation supérieure et différente ni engouement ni dédain, mais peu inclinée à s'en approprier les formes d'art pour l'embellissement du royaume et la glorification de la monarchie.*¹¹

On the other hand, the Sasanian dynastic change allegedly signalled an opposite reaction against Greekness, although some kings can be considered as exceptions. According to this view of

⁷ See the introduction to *The Journals and Letters of George Finlay*, vol. I–II, edited by J.M. Hussey, Cambridge 1995.

⁸ Berlinerblau 1999: 5.

⁹ Chapot 1904: 207–296.

¹⁰ Chapot 1904: 232.

¹¹ Chapot 1904: 235.

things, Greekness necessarily coincides with Hellenism. Needless to say, Philostratus' account of the Eretrians (*V. Apoll.* I 23) was taken for granted by Chapot, who even thought that the "Medians" and "Persians" mentioned by inscriptions from Greece and the Aegean sea are to be interpreted as evidence of "Far-eastern Greeks".¹²

Chapot thought also that "Babylonian" was a sobriquet meaning "Far-eastern Greeks", and imagined a sort of colonial intellectual élite, which however did not survive the fall of the Seleucid empire¹³: he had in mind Plutarch's story about Amphicrates (*Lucull.* 22. 6f.). In fact, it is not easy to tell how 'Greek' the urban communities in the East were. We lack solid evidence about wandering sophists, traders and artisans: in this situation commonsense is of no help, nor is comparison with later situations in the East. When he wrote his essay, Chapot possibly had in mind the policy of the Ottoman empire, which developed the skills of the minorities – *dhimmi* peoples, or *millet* – in order better to control those in possession of know-how. But how ancient can this situation be? The scanty evidence leaves much room for speculation.

Perhaps it was not appropriate to call a Greek intellectual "Seleucian", as the name recalled Macedonia rather than Hellas. For instance, with rare chauvinism Livy denied any Greekness to Macedonians: *Macedones, qui Alexandriam in Aegypto, qui Seleuciam ac Babylo-niam quique alias sparsas per orbem terrarum colonias habent, in Syros, Parthos, Aegyptios degenerarunt* (XXXVIII 17.11). But Livy had a grudge against Macedonians: according to him, the Romans would not have had to fear even Alexander's army. On the other hand, Plutarch claims a high degree of Hellenism in Asia, thanks to the process of civilization promoted by Alexander: thus, "when Alexander was civilizing Asia, Homer was commonly read, and the children of the Persians, of the Susianians, and of the Gedrosians learned to chant the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides" (*Fort. Alex.* 70, 328 d). In his would-be epoch-making work (which, on the contrary, was almost ignored), Samuel Eddy remarked, "Plutarch was wrong: this didn't happen. But it might have".¹⁴

The followers of this latter tendency will easily find Greekness, especially in archaeological finds. This is the case with the *rytha*, or ceremonial drinking horns from Nisa: these valuable artefacts, found in an important Parthian centre, have been associated by Soviet archaeologists with Iranian religious ceremonies.¹⁵ But the French archaeologist Paul Bernard (somehow, a continuator of Chapot), according to his analysis of the *rytha*, found them positively Greek: "leur fabrication aurait répondu à la demande d'un seul et même commanditaire et celui-ci appartenait à une communauté grecque".¹⁶

¹² Chapot 1904: 238. On the Eretrians of Cissia see evidence and bibliography: Grosso 1958: 351–375; Penella 1974: 295–300.

¹³ Chapot 1904: 241 ff.

¹⁴ Eddy 1961: 341.

¹⁵ See also Wieschöfer 1996b: 61.

¹⁶ Bernard 1991: 35. What is the evidence for this argument? Apparently, only the 'pure' iconography of the manufacts, and the name of the goddess Hestia inscribed in Greek letters on rython 76: Bernard refuses the *interpretatio Iranica* of the inscription *Hestia*, which Soviet archaeologists considered as a dynastic cult of fire, and claims its 'natural' interpretation as "le nom de la divinité protectrice du foyer civique" (Bernard 1985: 90). Yet how we can tell whether a work of Greek art was used by Greeks *de souche* or rather by a Parthian élite whose taste for Hellenism is well known? As Wieschöfer says: "to say that this 'Hellenization' was only superficial seems to me dangerous, in the light of our scanty evidence" (Wieschöfer 1996b: 62 and 66, note 64 on Bernard 1985). In any case, though epigraphical texts provide valuable evidence; this is not always the best evidence with which to test linguistic changes (Banfi 1995: 13–20).

The same argument is applied to technology. Chapot argued that only Greeks could be good artisans. Of Eastern terracottas of the Seleucid period, he remarks:

*Mais quels étaient les fabricants? Des Orientaux dressés à la manière grecque? Je dirais plus volontiers: des Grecs dont le milieu avait influencé la technique? Peu importe à cet égard le sujet représenté. Dans l'art industriel, c'est la commande, l'achat, qui détermine la fabrication. Un Grec ne répugnait pas à façonner dans l'argile, pour un indigène chaldéen, Mylitta ou Anaïtis...*¹⁷

In the same way, when he considers Parthian coins, he rhetorically asks "de quelle race étaient les ouvriers?"¹⁸ In line with the opinions of earlier scholarship, he wonders: "Pourquoi le choix de cette langue? S'applique-t-il aux monnaies royales ou seulement aux émissions des cités grecques?"¹⁹ Then some doubts enter his mind, and he concedes that the staff of the Parthian mints could well have been a mixed one, maybe including Jewish or Syrian immigrants. He finally concludes that the Greeks introduced coins into Iran; simple-minded, hunt-loving Parthians must have had recourse to Greek experience, as only Greeks were in a position to transmit to them the necessary know-how. On the other hand, Chapot cannot imagine a strong Greek presence in the East, and so, in order to be consistent with his own projections, he gives free rein to nonsense:

*Le Grec ne s'exile guère sans esprit de retour; c'est, pour les grandes étendues continentales, un fort médiocre colon. La religion de Zoroastre préconisait la culture du sol; l'idéal d'un Grec n'a jamais été de travailler la terre; les vastes plaines ou plateaux de l'Iran et de la Mésopotamie sont mal appropriés à son étroit mercantilisme, auquel conviennent bien davantage les îles, les vallées côtières, les ports, que relient entre eux quelques heures de navigation [...].*²⁰

I give one last example. In Gordyene, a district between Mesopotamia and Armenia, the natives "had an exceptional reputation as master-builders and as experts of siege-engines; and it was for this reason that Tigranes used them in such work" (Strabo XVI 1.24). For Chapot there is no doubt: they were Greek mercenaries.²¹ True, this may be possible (see Plut. *Lucull.* 19; 32): but when Artaxias, the first king of post-Seleucid Armenia, in about 187 BCE needed a military adviser in order to fortify his capital, he wanted the best and he certainly got his money's worth. In fact, the (re)builder of Artaxata was the best practitioner, of all time, of Hellenistic military art, but his identity was less than Hellenic: his name was Hannibal, son of Hamilcar.

On the way to decolonization

Thus, according to Chapot's chauvinist image of the East (which conformed to traditional standards in Classical studies), the Euphrates appears as the frontier of Greekness. Even in Mesopotamia, he says, a Greek felt isolated; beyond Mesopotamia he was definitely lost.²²

¹⁷ Chapot 1904: 224.

¹⁸ Chapot 1904: 229.

¹⁹ Chapot 1904: 232 f.

²⁰ Chapot 1904: 236.

²¹ Chapot 1907: 19 n. 1; more cautiously Syme (1995: 53 ff.). He suggests the possibility of a blunder by Strabo.

²² Chapot 1904: 237.

However, this image did not apply to the Semitic world, but only the countries with an Iranian cultural (and religious) tradition. In fact, Hellenism in Babylon or Jerusalem has been taken more seriously than Parthian 'Hellenism', often considered as a mere veneer. So, Rostovtzeff could write: "...the Parthian kings were but an accident in the history of the Iranian world. They were not themselves creative in any field, whether in government, religion, or art. Their only service to mankind was in not destroying the elements of Greek culture in their empire, but in allowing them to develop unmolested".²³

Rostovtzeff was just rewriting older history. Recent studies on Rostovtzeff's cultural roots can explain such a radical view, and explain too the opposite (and mirror image) view of Nina Pigulevskaja:

*En réalité l'hellénisation ne fit qu'effleurer les peuples, qui continuaient à parler et à écrire leur langue maternelle. Si certains auteurs n'en négligent pas moins les sources en langues orientales, il faut en chercher les raisons dans un certain mépris pour l'Orient, dans une exagération du rôle de l'hellénisation, une exaltation excessive de la civilisation gréco-romaine; le caractère original et profond de la civilisation des pays du Proche-Orient demeurait ignoré. L'"européo-centrisme", si l'on veut ainsi dire, empêcha d'apprécier l'Orient à sa juste valeur. De là naquit l'idée que la conquête gréco-macédonienne avait été un bienfait et que l'hellénisation ne pose plus aucun problème. L'offensive des armées d'Alexandre le Grand fut désastreuse pour les populations et les sources locales en témoignent.*²⁴

In any case, from Herodotus onwards, the East of the classics is mostly imaginary, and the relation between Classical and Oriental studies has always been highly problematic. A great historian such as Eduard Meyer, who at least included the East in his *History of the Ancient World*, has been often cited as a model of far-sightedness, but he did not find many followers (and in any case, Meyer had less interest in the Hellenistic period, which he considered, with Spengler, as a moment of "Amerikanisierung" of classical civilization).²⁵ On the contrary, the 'institutional' role of classicists and orientalists kept the fields separate. Roman historians still suffer from this separation, whereas Greek history is on the way to recovering a connection with the East. As for Orientalists, the problem lies in specialization. The non-specialist Edward Said (*pace* Bernard Lewis) has shown the shortcomings of this conception. Even more radically, the great Islamic scholar Maxime Rodinson argued: "Il n'y a pas d'orientalisme; il n'y a pas d'Orient".

This partly explains why the discourse of Orientalism does not square with that of Classicists, although both follow the same cultural logic. As a matter of fact, in a global society the very definition of Orientalism needs a thorough revision. In the heyday of Orientalism, when the "East was a career", Classical scholarship was accompanied by a peculiar image of the East, mostly associated with the Ottoman Empire.

A better balanced definition of the East within Classical studies can be found, of course, in the domain of Late Antiquity. This is beyond the scope of my paper; however, I think it is worth quoting the definition of East given by the Bollandist Paul Peeters:

Ce terme d'Orient, dont je suis forcé de me servir, faute de mieux, est une expression géographique et historique, dont la littérature aussi fait grand usage. Il donne l'illusion d'avoir un sens bien

²³ Rostovtzeff 1935: 164; see also Neusner 1965: 19.

²⁴ Pigulevskaja 1963: 28.

²⁵ Meyer 1925: 61.

défini, parce qu'il se laisse employer couramment sans provoquer aucune demande d'explication. Mais, comme nous aurons l'occasion de nous en apercevoir, il ne désigne qu'une réalité fuyante, aux contours indécis, qui, par endroits, se perd dans une ombre totalement trouble. Pour nous, dans ces entretiens, Orient est un terme collectif désignant les populations, les langues et la culture propres de certaines régions que la civilisation grecque a en partie recouvertes, mais qu'elle n'a pas dépossédées de leurs caractères raciques.²⁶

Fifty years ago, such words were intended to be provocative. When Fr Peeters was writing these lines, at the age of eighty, Peter Brown was still a teenager, and Classical philologists still held in contempt the literatures of the Christian East, as plagiarizing and bereft of originality. Peeters ridiculed the "dénomination conventionnelle" of the "East", an ambiguous conception relating to an area that was neither well-defined nor homogenous. In the end, only the contrast between *hellénismos* and *ethnè* persisted in Peeter's analysis.

I have hitherto traced a sketchy, preliminary outline of the 'paradigmatic' image of the East in classical scholarship. It is too early to recapitulate recent revisions of this paradigm; nonetheless it will be useful to hint at some recent considerations. Classical scholarship, even when concerned with the ancient East, did not easily accept alternatives to this paradigm. Some alternatives came from outsiders, or from scholars with aprioristic positions (e.g. Eddy, Wolski, and, for India, Narain). Although it is beyond the limits of this paper, the case of India is paradigmatic for the general issue. Whereas Tarn developed the Hellenocentric view at its most extreme, Narain reacted in a similar but opposite way in advancing an Indocentric view. However, both views give only a partial picture, since Tarn was only interested in the interaction between Greeks and natives, and Narain focused on political analysis.²⁷

As early as 1984, Józef Wolski sketched out some brief reflections on his would-be "Enteuropäisierung" of Oriental studies. Denouncing the lack of a critical perspective in Classical studies, he concluded:

*Die antike Historiographie, die man wohl in dieser Hinsicht kaum als objektiv betrachten kann, hat unter dem Einfluß der Tendenz, die wir als Europazentrismus bezeichnen, allem Griechischen die Oberhand gegeben, während die Welt des Orients, besonders die Persen, als diejenige der Barbaren, der der Willkür preisgegebenen Sklaven, als minderwertig angesehen wurde. In Verbindung mit den Lücken der Überlieferung, mit der missverstandenen Bedeutung der iranischen Terminologie, mit ihrer ungenauen Wiedergabe, wurde diese ganz negative Einstellung der antiken Historiographie angesehen werden muß. Erst die tiefen und umfangreichen Umwälzungen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, besonders aber die Abkehr von Kolonialsystem, haben der Wissenschaft die Möglichkeit gegeben, sich von diesen Bindungen zu befreien und die neuen Wege einzuschlagen, als deren letztes Ziel uns eine neue Synthese der orientalischen Geschichte erscheint.*²⁸

The revision of this paradigm by post-colonialist historiography is very recent, and has not yet been accepted everywhere. However, a great part of the scientific community responded to Wolski's complaining summons, and scholarship is now trying to reconsider the whole matter in the light of 'Post-Imperialism' or, if you like, of political and intellectual 'de-colonization'.²⁹ We can detect several hints of this process, although it will take more than a generation before classicists are completely cognizant of it. A further step in the process of decolonization

²⁶ Peeters 1950: 8.

²⁷ Srivastara 1991: 156–171.

²⁸ Wolski 1984: 442.

²⁹ Briant 1998: 309; Dąbrowa 1998: 35–44.

was the recognition that the very concept of "East" is inadequate for the historian. Whatever the influence of Edward Said on classical studies, a better, more thorough evaluation of a non-orientalist East is coming into being. Thus, in his work on Semitic Near East in Roman times, Fergus Millar confirmed the need to distinguish many "Easts".³⁰ As Millar focuses on the Semitic Near East, he did not have to attend to the Iranian world, nor to the Semitic Middle East: this has been the object of the innovative monograph by Susan Sherwin-White and Amélie Kuhrt.³¹

Sherwin-White and Kuhrt's chapter 6 marked an important stage in this respect.³² On the cultural plane, Glen Bowersock affirmed that "This universal tongue of the Eastern Mediterranean in no way represented an imperialist triumph on the part of the Greek".³³ It was, then, obviously necessary to revise earlier positions: indeed, "it is hard to believe that no Greek in hellenistic Susa tried to learn Persian and Aramaic".³⁴ On the other hand, we have the opposite phenomenon: "members of local propertied élites who in the hellenistic period practised a degree of self-hellenisation to preserve or acquire political rank".³⁵ Just a generation earlier, it made perfect sense to assume that Greek inscriptions were meant solely for Greek readers.³⁶

In fact, whereas the opposition East/West is mostly a modern projection, the ancient world was more interested in social, territorial or dynastic oppositions. Where Greek was used as an 'official' language for diplomacy and chancery, its use was different according to the specific context. The use of Greek in Parthian Nisa (where, however, Aramaic is also attested) does not necessarily mean "hellenization", nor do bilingual or trilingual inscriptions such those of Piodasses/Ashoka or Shahpuhr the Great make for "Hellenism".

True, a "Sprachbarriere" did exist,³⁷ and the East really did have to cope with a pronounced ideology of Greek cultural unity.³⁸ Yet modern, 'decolonized' scholarship has managed also to detect cases of *interpretatio Orientalis* of Greek cultural patterns. In the same way that we now respect Etruscan interpretations of Greek myths, and we no longer look at them as a banalization or a degeneration of the original patterns, thanks to the study of religious syncretism,³⁹ so too, in the East, we can see that Greek used as a new vehicle for an older tradition, just as 'Western' style may be seen in the art of Gandhara. To sum up, we can say with David Potter (and in disagreement with Fergus Millar):

*Still, the peoples of the western end of the fertile crescent, the descendants of Hittites or Iranian settlers on the Anatolian plateau, did not suffer instant cultural amnesia. Their traditions might increasingly have to be expressed through the idiom of Greek culture if they were to be able to communicate with their political masters, but these traditions did, in and of themselves, constitute a strand of indigenous eastern wisdom.*⁴⁰

³⁰ Millar 1993.

³¹ Sherwin-White/Kuhrt 1993.

³² See Sherwin-White/Kuhrt 1993: 186 for a brief description of ideological tendencies.

³³ Bowersock 1997: 91.

³⁴ Sherwin-White/Kuhrt 1993: 148. See also Boucharlat 1985: 71–81. Michel Tardieu (1996: 179–189) showed that Philostratus' account on the Greek community of Parthia – "Babylon" according to his classical code – can be taken as a literary, yet valuable description of ancient Susa.

³⁵ Tardieu 1996: 153.

³⁶ Kandahar: Scerrato 1964: 7 ff.

³⁷ Wieshöfer 1996a: 48.

³⁸ Srivastara 1991: 157.

³⁹ Dench 1995: 39.

⁴⁰ Potter 1994: 185.

In fact, Hellenism seems more a matter of transformation than preservation. This is easier to detect from written evidence, even though historians should be more concerned with the delicate matter of iconography.⁴¹ Archaeologists now argue that Hellenism in the East is "a phenomenon still largely unknown in its development, which seems to have differed extensively from region to region":⁴² future research will be more concerned on the complexity of the issues and of the related methodologies.

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⁴¹ Monneret de Villard 1948: 236.

⁴² In a region such as Margiana, where traces of Hellenistic domination seem fainter than elsewhere, a recent re-examination of the pottery evidence confirms the data of Strabo and Pliny the Elder, which stress the importance of rural settlement (and possibly minor sites) around the urban centre of Antioch/Merv: Callieri 1996: 569. This situation fits well the Eretrian community in Cissia described by Philostratus (see above, note 12).

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